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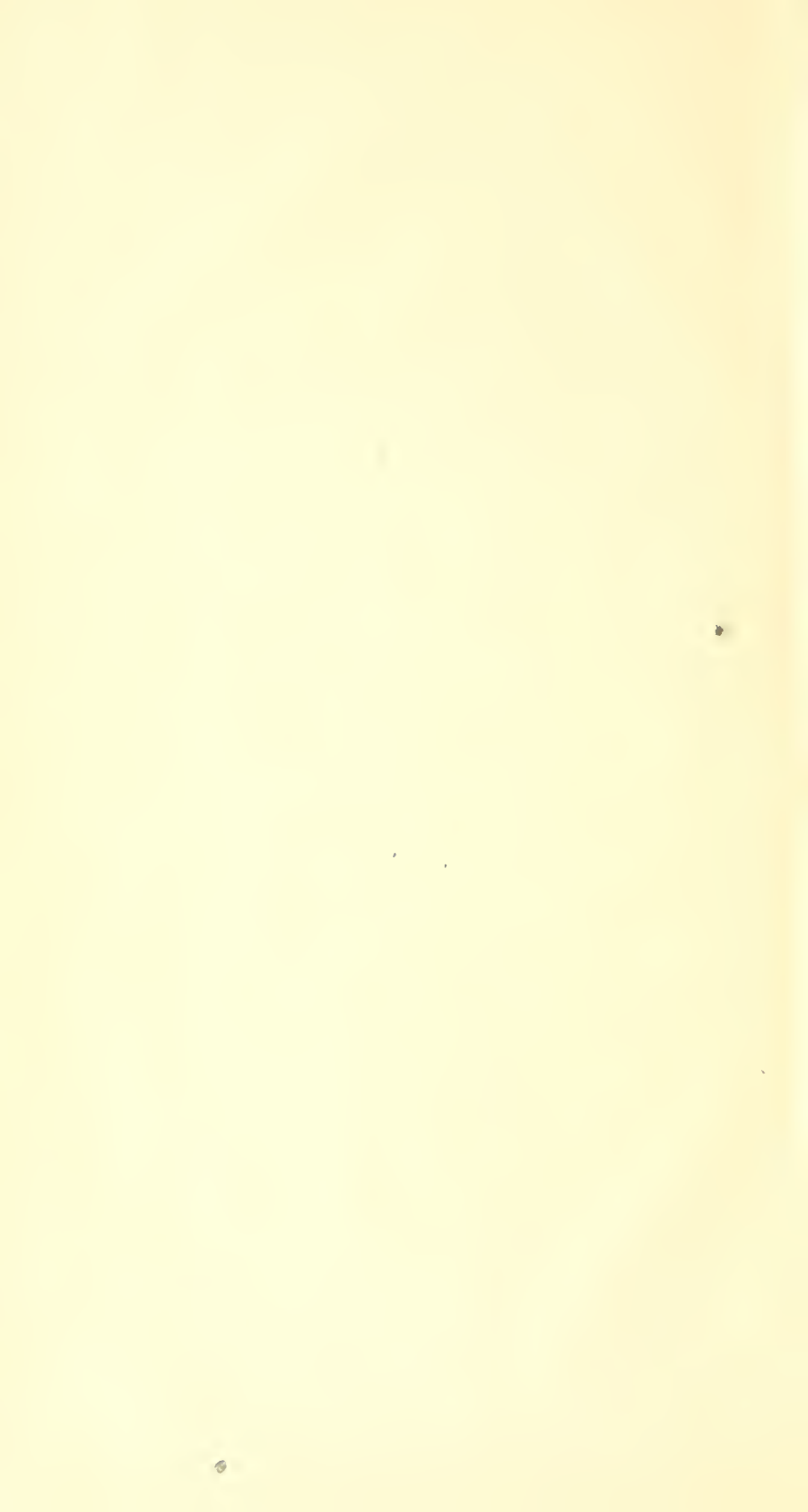
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REPORT

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS AND VIEWS

OF THE

TAUNTON UNION,

For the Relief and Improvement of the

COLORED RACE;

TOGETHER WITH THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE SOCIETY,

AND A

LIST OF OFFICERS,

CHOSEN, MAY, 1835.

PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD OF

MANAGERS.

TAUNTON:

PRINTED BY BRADFORD & AMSBURY.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Citizens of Taunton, feeling a deep interest in the degraded condition of the Colored population of our country, yet, disposed to do nothing in the premises, unwarranted by the obligations, which they owe the institutions of the land, or inconsistent with the plain precepts of humanity, have, after a thorough investigation of the subject of Slavery as it exists among us, seen fit to form a UNION SOCIETY, having for its object the Relief of the Colored Race generally. The field is large, sufficiently large, they think, to move efficiently in the cause, and that with great effect, without striking at the root of our well established institutions, endangering the Constitution, and through it, the welfare and happiness of *twelve millions* of People.

The Citizens of this place have held several Public Meetings, at the Town Hall, at which the above subject has been fully discussed by gentlemen well qualified for the task.—At one of which, the following gentlemen were appointed a Committee to embody the views of the meeting, and to report the form of a Constitution.

REV. ANDREW BIGELOW,
HON. JAMES L. HODGES,
MR. JOSEPH DIXON,
HON. FRANCIS BAYLIES,
JAMES SPROAT, Esq.,
MR. S. O. DUNBAR,
H. G. O. COLBY, Esq.,
JOSEPH L. LORD, Esq.,
MR. J. C. YOUNG,
REV. JOHN B. DODS, AND
HORATIO PRATT, Esq.

At a subsequent meeting of the Citizens, the Committee offered

the Report and Constitution which will be found in the following pages, which were severally adopted. Thereupon, the Society was formed, and is destined, it is believed, to increasing importance and growing usefulness. Being a Peace Society, we do not venture to recriminate, or denounce. We are Abolitionists, as we think, in the proper sense of the term; we are Colonizationists; we are Unionists on Constitutional principles, and would cherish and spread afar the spirit of brotherly Kindness and Charity.

Taunton, June, 1835.

REPORT.

AMONG the benevolent enterprises of the age, most interesting to this people as an important member of the family of nations, that which invites the energies of the Christian and the Patriot to the eventual rescue of millions of human beings within our own borders from the condition of abject servitude; claims our profound consideration. And, it is believed, no one, who has engaged in the serious contemplation of this great subject will refuse his assent to these propositions.—That the subject of slavery is an enormous evil, both in a moral and political point of view:—that the condition of those subject to it, ought to be ameliorated, and; that all proper and lawful measures ought to be adopted for the improvement of the condition of the *whole colored race*, and for the progressive emancipation of that portion whose servitude can be safely exchanged for civil freedom. In regard to the first proposition, while it commands the acquiescence of the benevolent and reflecting every where, especially of those devoted to the prevalence of equal rights in a land blessed, above all others, with civil and religious liberty, may, by its mere abstractness, obscure or postpone circumstances in themselves of vital importance to the existence of *that very liberty*. It is not difficult to find in every Commonwealth or State either on this, or the other side of the Atlantic, institutions absolutely wrong in principle, and, of course, injurious in some of their effects; and yet, for sound and obvious reasons the people affected by them, prefer either their gradual mitigation and change or, their continual toleration, until public safety, the high end and aim of civil governments, shall justify the use of the strong hand of excision or subversion. Nor do the wise and benevolent, in any country abroad, venture to revive the spirit that sent forth, in the middle ages of Christianity, armies to correct the abuses, or to punish the wickedness of Foreign lands. The Turks had captured Jerusalem and thus desecrated the holiest of cities. This aroused the fervours of Peter, the hermit. I will rouse, said he, to the captives, the *martial nations* of Europe in your cause, and Europe was obedient to the summons. *We* are not ignorant where lies the *martial* strength of this country, but we trust, it will not be roused from its manly rest,—it will not be evoked to battle with friends and brethren, in a cause theirs alone to mitigate, to suffer or to remove. The example, most recent and most appalling presented by France when she proclaimed her philosophy, false and desola-

ting in politics and religion, as it was to the souls of men, and fatal to millions of human lives as its sanguinary progress among the nations, had but too deplorably proved, will not be adduced, it is hoped, to justify another similar interference on the part of one community, however inspired with a supposed philanthropy, with the dearest interests and sacred rights of another. Liberty, freedom, by whatever name personal exemption from the power of a master may be called, is undoubtedly a fit object of desire and pursuit. Yet it may be pursued and even gained at a sacrifice greater than the benefit conferred. The learned and eccentric Jeremy Taylor gives an anecdote, somewhat in point. St. Louis, King of France sent Ivo, Bishop of Chartres on an Embassy. The Bishop returned and informed the king, that he met a grave and stately matron on the way, with a censer of fire in one hand, and a vessel of water in the other; and observing her to have a remarkably religious and phantastic deportment and look, he asked her what those symbols meant, and what she meant to do with her fire and water? she answered, my purpose is with the fire to burn paradise, and with my water to quench the flames of hell, that men may serve God, purely for the love of God. So, purely for the love of liberty, regardless of the existing association of circumstances or of probable consequences, the immediate abolition of Slavery is preached, and to be effected, not, perhaps intentionally, by the preachers or partizans of the cause, through the agency of fire and water, but we have no doubt, the new *apothecosis* they would render to civil liberty, would, be celebrated by the instrumentality of those elements of nature, in combinations as direful and effective as human skill and malignity can devise. That passion, revenge, whose universality and cruelty in man, it is the noble aim and *peculiar* duty of Christianity to subdue, will have a sway, which, flames may, indeed, illustrate with the horrors of a servile war, but which many waters cannot quench. We would honor the cause of human liberty but we would not distress or disgrace the cause of humanity.

These general remarks naturally spring from considering measures, so vehemently urged, as we have lately witnessed, with a view to the immediate and entire abolition of Slavery in certain States in our Confederacy. These states, in relation to their possession and management of a slave population, are as truly independent of other states, as are the distant nations of the world, of each other. The national Constitution, we all know, is a document imparting none but specific or necessarily implied powers, explicitly declaring all others to be reserved to the States, respectively. And, moreover, it takes special notice, by recognition and provision, of the institution of Slavery, as pertaining, *exclusively*, to the sovereignty of the States. Perhaps in no aspect of that grave, yet much vexed and abused instrument, the CONSTITUTION, can we perceive a more clear demarcation of individual State power on the one hand, and exclusion of all other, whether of the Union, or, of co-ordinate states, on the other, than

is there presented in relation to this subject. Here, then, we meet a political impediment which should restrain the true patriot from a course of imprudent interference, whose results, commencing in impudent rashness, may very naturally, grow to anarchy, violence, murder and the universal dissolution of the fabric of our national entity. Still, the philanthropist need not be deterred from prosecuting a feasible plan of benevolence toward the Slaves because he may not rush into the temple of our common, political salvation, with a blazing torch, or may not apply it to some of its dark and noisome appendages. No, that cause, true to its origin and to its tendencies, whose object is the doing much good, and avoiding and removing all possible evil, need not forego the use of the numerous, multiform agencies which may be put forth for the melioration of the whole colored race, and the gradual liberation of the enslaved. And we would point to some of the means which may properly be employed in aid of this great and good cause. The education, moral and religious of the *free* blacks, throughout our wide country, in the non slave-holding as well as the slave holding States, demands the strenuous and constant exertions of the enlightened and benevolent. To this great class much and permanent good, pure and free from peril may and ought to be effected by organized bodies. The inculcation of moral and religious truth on the minds and hearts of the *enslaved*, and their still more minute and business aiding instruction, with the consent of their masters, is an imperative duty on those who would prepare the bondman for freedom. To this end, moral suasion must be used, to convince the master and the mistress who will listen to the friendly appeal, of their deep-responsibilities, of their bounden duty, and of their perils whether immediate or contingent;—in short, being the almost absolute controllers of the destinies of their fellow men in bonds, “of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.” For, after all the zeal and eloquence and toil we witness going forth to preach or to break down the deep-rooted institution of Slavery, as it exists in our land, these are the persons to whom the language of fraternal remonstrance and counsel must first be addressed; in whose ears *alone* the tocsin of alarm must be sounded, and from whom alone can proceed, efficient measures for the redemption of the enslaved. By them, principally, are the evils of the accursed system experienced, to many of them it is an acknowledged burthen, and *to all*, to them and to us, it will eventually prove a fatal excrescence on the body politic, unless timely measures be adopted for its reduction and final extirpation. To this end, much must be done within the slave possessing states, to prepare general society and to mature legislation for the probable benefits of manumission.

And this vast and difficult work must be done amidst the homes and citadels of Slavery; and it will require the forecast and caution proper to an untried, perilous and far extending experiment on a degraded race and the accustomed happiness of free-

men. Thus, in the lapse of years fraught with wise efforts, the Congress of the U. S. may receive the appeal of the Southern and South western States with a favor which shall attach the cordial concurrence of the non slave holding States in the enactment of laws for the care and safety of the freed man and his master. In this conviction, we would solicit attention to *a fact which the public friends of abolitionism seem not to have regarded.* They insist on the duty of *immediate emancipation*, and of conferring on the *quondam* Slaves, the rights and privileges of freemen; or, as some seem to apprehend, this may be too large a boon, they would curtail and modify it in form and degree. Now, Civil Liberty, that which every freeman claims as his inalienable birthright, in this country, knows no neighborhood but that of absolute Slavery. The legal freeman is so absolutely. Under our polity, there can be no other rank of men, except minors, insane persons and those condemned for crime or supposed violation of standing laws, and this class of persons, it is presumed, is not to be taken as the example for the grand accession to the body of the free, contemplated by the abolitionists. Have they then duly considered the importance of extending an equal participation in the rights and privileges of freemen to some two or three millions of human beings, whom, an hitherto unbroken, servile bondage of body and mind has made unfit for any condition but that of a degraded labor without intellect, or of brutish passions without virtue? And do they accustom themselves to compare the free and noble institutions of our common country with those of any other, even with those of England, our *Father* land, wherein Slavery has been abolished? No government on earth *can* bring the Slave to a freedom so expansive and so responsible, as our own. The liberty of the manumitted of the hither Islands of England, is but an exemption from bondage. Those of our country would become positively free citizens capable of uniting in, and it may be, of controlling the election of civil officers and legislators. Yes, with or without the aid of demagogues and aspirants of our own complexion, "our own kith and kin," they may decide the election of Governors, and Senators and Representatives and even that of the Chief Magistrate of the Union, and their voice may preponderate in that of Representatives in the councils of the Nation. Are we prepared for such results? But say the preachers of *absolute and immediate abolition*, "we do not mean it shall take place to-day, or to-morrow, or even next year, but the *duty* is immediately pressing and the sin of Slavery ought instantly to be washed out." How is this solemn, moral precept and dictation to be understood? *We* say as firmly and as conscientiously as the abolitionists, Slavery ought to be discontinued and forever cease to be; *We*, too would breathe "the spirit of universal emancipation." But we would require time, during which appropriate means should be employed to effect the desired end. It would seem, the controversy, in some of its stages, is merely a matter of verbal criticism, indeed, a sort of *Logomachy*. Yet the

abolitionists zealously, aye, furiously insist on the right, the duty and imperious obligation of *immediate* emancipation of the entire mass of the Slaves! Well, if this be the true position, we say, the emancipated should step forth from their degradation, to enjoy equally with ourselves, all the immunities and benefits of citizenship. To return to the argument, the freed men of the Isles referred to, have no such power; no power of action in the great machinery of government, nay, no liberty to approach its remotest muniments, in the attitude of citizenship, or with such attributes as those with which we dignify the free, of whatever complexion. And we would not pretermit or disparage the fact that our citizens have been always pre-eminently educated to civil liberty; that our fathers during many generations understood and enjoyed it, that patriarchal colonies of them, brought it hither as among the holiest of their possessions, and its light has been shining on their posterity with increasing splendor, ever since. Yet, do we not feel the necessity (how often too fearfully!) of appropriating for our behoof as men, and, especially as fellow-citizens, all the appliances of useful education and liberal learning? The press and the pulpit, the school-room and the university, the frequent assemblies of townsmen and the halls of legislation are all found necessary to keep alive the spirit of civil and religious liberty in ourselves and for its transmission to the extended, crowded host of coming generations. Without pursuing this topic further, can there be safety, we would not say, benefit, but even the possibility of safety, either for our sacred, time-hallowed institutions, or to the liberated blacks, should they be suffered, *en masse*, or in any great numbers, to approach these institutions in the all-pervading and tremendous name of equal liberty and equal rights? A moment's reflection will convince any one not devoted to a favourite scheme of inconsiderate philanthropy, that those who have never been able to govern themselves and have been brought up under no higher motives than those peculiar to a state of servitude, cannot at a moment and without a fitting education, be capable of self-government, much less, of that of the great Commonwealth. The Exodus and subsequent history of the Jews under Moses and Aaron at the command of God, as the Bible informs us, is illustrative of this point. These Jews had been slaves in Egypt 430 years, and were brought out of bondage as destined to an inheritance in Canaan. Yet so vile, ignorant and idolatrous were they, that God would not leave them to freedom and self-government. And, after a severe probation of forty years under the moral law, thundered into their ears at Mount Sinai, and camp laws and various disciplinary regulations as preparative to their enjoyment of the promised land, they had not become fit for that great favor, and it was not bestowed. They all, but Caleb and Joshua, died in an ignorance and wickedness so incorrigible, even under the perpetual tuition of wise judges and rulers appointed under the authority of Jehovah, as to be unfit for the blessings and duties of Liberty. Here is a Bible instance, in point, solemnly commending

to our regard, the plan of progressive instruction and gradual emancipation. The celebrated Dr. Adam Clarke has this note on the 14th verse of the 2d chapter of Exodus. "He, (Moses,) saw that the Israelites were not yet prepared to leave their bondage and that though God had called him to be their leader, yet his providence had not sufficiently opened the way. So that, a preparation of mind and morals was requisite for these people, even, before their departure from Egypt, and afterwards, a severe discipline and a probation of forty years in the wilderness; and all this proved to be ineffectual. Moses was truly a colonizationist. We would yield our cordial approval of the generous scheme and efforts of the American Colonization Society, whose benevolence has only been limited, by the want of pecuniary means, and of that universal co-operation, which it earnestly desires and eminently deserves. Comprising as it does nearly all the prominent plans of Christian benevolence of the present age, it, moreover, proffers the happiest avenue of escape from danger, both to the master and the liberated slave. Thus considered, it comes to the aid of the cause of gradual emancipation and will readily and comfortably transfer the colored freeman, with his own consent, to the land of his fathers, nay more, to a community of enlightened, industrious, Christian freemen of his own race. Thus may be obviated the objection which has been urged, founded on the dangers apprehended from the emancipation of Slaves, who might, in great masses abide, thereafter, in the immediate vicinity of their former masters. Enlarge but the operations of the Society and the general correction of the impolicy and injustice of the system of Slavery will be proportionately realized. The Society intend to effect all that the most sanguine liberators can considerately desire, unless he shall desire multiplied exasperations, sufferings and wrongs between the master and the Slave or freedman; or, an unnatural amalgamation of the races; or, an isolated settlement of the colored one within our Country's domain. In relation to the *first* of these consequences, enough has already been said. The *second*, supposes an intermingling of blood from which all our better feelings turn with abhorrence, and which, to urge, or seriously suggest, is the arousing an indomitable spirit in a deservedly proud, intelligent, chivalric race, on the one hand, and, to fasten stronger and stronger, to sink deeper and deeper, the chains and manacles of Slavery, on the other.

The other *potential* plan in the contemplation of the liberators, that of a distinct location of the emancipated, we would not, at this time, discuss. Its feasibility and advantages, as well as its difficulties and dangers can be better understood by those in whose neighborhood, it would be brought into operation, and by whom, its effects, whether for good or for evil, would be most sensibly, most extensively and most permanently felt. The Committee deeply impressed with a sense of the magnitude of the subject before them, and of the solemn duty of relieving and making better for this world and the next, that great portion of

our brethren, the colored race, both, those who being free, ought to enjoy the full benefits of freedom, and,

“Those, whose very souls are moulded to the yoke,
And stamped with servitude”—

have turned their attention to the recent “Exposition of the plans and objects of the American Union, for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race.” A brief history and synopsis of this Society, we will here present, while we commend to the Public, the Document referred to. Many distinguished philanthropists, jurists and eminent Christians in our country had—for years, contemplated a plan, whereby measures might be put into successful and safe operation, for the melioration and emancipation of the Colored Race, without trenching on the rights of individuals or any body of men, and, without exciting sectional jealousies, or the dormant energies of servitude. More than *one hundred* of such men coming from *ten* of the United States, assembled in Boston, January 14th, 1835; and with a seriousness and carefulness befitting the momentous occasion, came forth to the world under the title we have already named; proclaiming no hostility to any other Society, and making no boast of *superior piety or a pre-eminent charity*. Let us, then, advert to its avowed intentions and purposes. In the first place, they invite all the friends of this cause to associated, local efforts for the improvement of the people of color in all our cities and larger towns. The Society proposes “religious instruction, by affectionate, discreet and faithful teachers, to be provided for the *free* colored people, in such forms as may be best suited to their wants.” They propose “schools to be provided in which every colored child shall be enabled to acquire as good an education, as is due by birthright to the other inhabitants of this Country. They propose the bringing up the children of the emancipated to respectable and regular employments. For, lamentably deficient are these, in the facilities enjoyed by others in gaining an adequate acquaintance with the mechanic arts and the diversified business of the social condition. Thus, they would implant the principles of common prudence and private economy, of saving and self-denial, of individual responsibility and self respect, of honest industry and its sure result, the satisfactions of thrift and importance in community. They propose “the bringing forward promising young men of color and aiding their education in the higher branches of knowledge.” These, it is believed, may be sent out as preachers of civilization and christianity, to the destitute myriads of the colored race in the British Colonies, now either emancipated, or passing through the process of emancipation. In Hayti, too, it is well understood, such missionaries would be well received, where those of our own complexion, would be resisted or avoided. And we might appeal to the generous sympathies of our entire Republic, and, with a fraternal affection for our Southern brethren, and ask, what may not be the malign influences to *them* and to *us all*, when we regard the pro-

imity of these Islands to our own shores and the free intercourse subsisting between them and our countrymen; unless education on principles of Christian civilization, which we respect as the guardians of our political peace, indeed the very elements of our existence, shall be recognized and cherished in those Islands? In benighted, wretched Africa, the natal region of the blacks, whither the sympathies and prayers of the Christian world are going forth with an accelerated energy peculiar to the passing age of high moral as well as physical power, the properly trained colored men of our land can do more to enlighten and elevate their race, than the combined learning, piety and zeal of our own could effect, under the most favorable auspices. The American Union proposes to ascertain facts by all proper available means, in relation to the condition, moral and religious; free and servile, of the whole colored race. This they would do, not for the mere purpose of *having* information but for using it to the effectuating great and beneficent results. They invite intelligence from all quarters and would be prepared by knowledge, to put forth their great plan of improvement and salvation, casting themselves on the wisdom of the just and merciful in the cause of human liberty, wherever they may be, and above all, looking to the providence of God, whence alone can proceed the consummation of their hopes and desires. The plan and object of this society, your committee, in the main, cordially approve, and in the conviction, that no other has hitherto been devised so well calculated to avoid evils and to promote substantial, unstained good, in the grand yet perilous enterprize of improving and emancipating the colored race, would cheerfully commend this institution to the favor of the public, and especially those among us who would strive with a well regulated Christian energy, *and not insanely*, against the mighty.

Deprecating Slavery, as an evil originating in Sin, and to be tolerated only by the force of circumstances, and to be abandoned so soon as these shall justify the righteous and equitable Act of Emancipation; we would always bend on our Southern brethren, an eye of sympathy for the trials and perils to which they are subjected, and we would not exacerbate the sources of misery to which they are exposed, by a mawkish philanthropy, or a severe code of supposed duty utterly at variance with the solemn stipulations of our entire Confederacy. These stipulations, we have no right to annul, nor have we a right to disturb injuriously to either party, the ancient, numerous, delicate and difficult relations, subsisting between the master and Slave. Here then we propose two principles of action founded in religion and the social compact, in morality and fraternal kindness. On these, we fix ourselves, in dissent from modern abolitionism and its awful consequences. But we would not fold our arms or close our hearts against the evils of Slavery. No, as we have already indicated, we would hail with gratitude as we would aid with pleasure, all Christian, constitutional measures for their entire extermination.

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

THIS Society shall be called the "TAUNTON UNION, FOR THE RELIEF AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE COLORED RACE."

ARTICLE II.

The object of this Association being the benevolent effort to promote in all suitable and peaceable ways, the intellectual and moral elevation of the Colored Race; and especially, by collecting and diffusing useful information, and exerting a kind, moral influence, to seek and apply the most judicious, and practicable means, for the final extinction of the System of Slavery in our land; it will lend its aid and influence to the "American Union," or any other Society, having for its object the same motives and principles of action, by which this association will be governed.

ARTICLE III.

Any person may become a member of this Society, by signing this Constitution.

ARTICLE IV.

The officers of this Society shall be a President, two Vice Presidents, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall be chosen annually, in such manner as the Society shall prescribe, and shall perform the duties incident to such offices respectively.

ARTICLE V.

There shall also be an executive committee of five members, who, together with the Corresponding and Recording Secretaries, shall constitute a board of Managers to transact the business of the Society. The President, Vice Presidents and Treasurer, shall be, *Ex officio*, members of the board.

ARTICLE VI.

It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary, to keep a true record of the proceedings of the society.

ARTICLE VII.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer, to take charge of all such monies, as may be obtained by subscription or donation in aid of the objects of the society, to be appropriated under the direction of the board of Managers, for the general purposes mentioned in Article 2, of this Constitution.

ARTICLE VIII.

The annual meeting of the Society, shall be held on the third Wednesday in May, at which time the officers shall be chosen, a report presented from the board of Managers, and such other business be transacted, as may require consideration.

ARTICLE IX.

The President of the Society, or in his absence, either of the Vice Presidents, may call special meetings of the Association at such other times, as they may think proper.

ARTICLE X.

This Constitution may be altered at any annual meeting by a vote of two thirds of the members present.

LIST OF OFFICERS.

PRESIDENT,
HON. JOHN M. WILLIAMS.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

FIRST.....HON. JAMES L. HODGES,
SECOND.....HON. FRANCIS BAYLIES.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY,
REV. ANDREW BIGELOW.

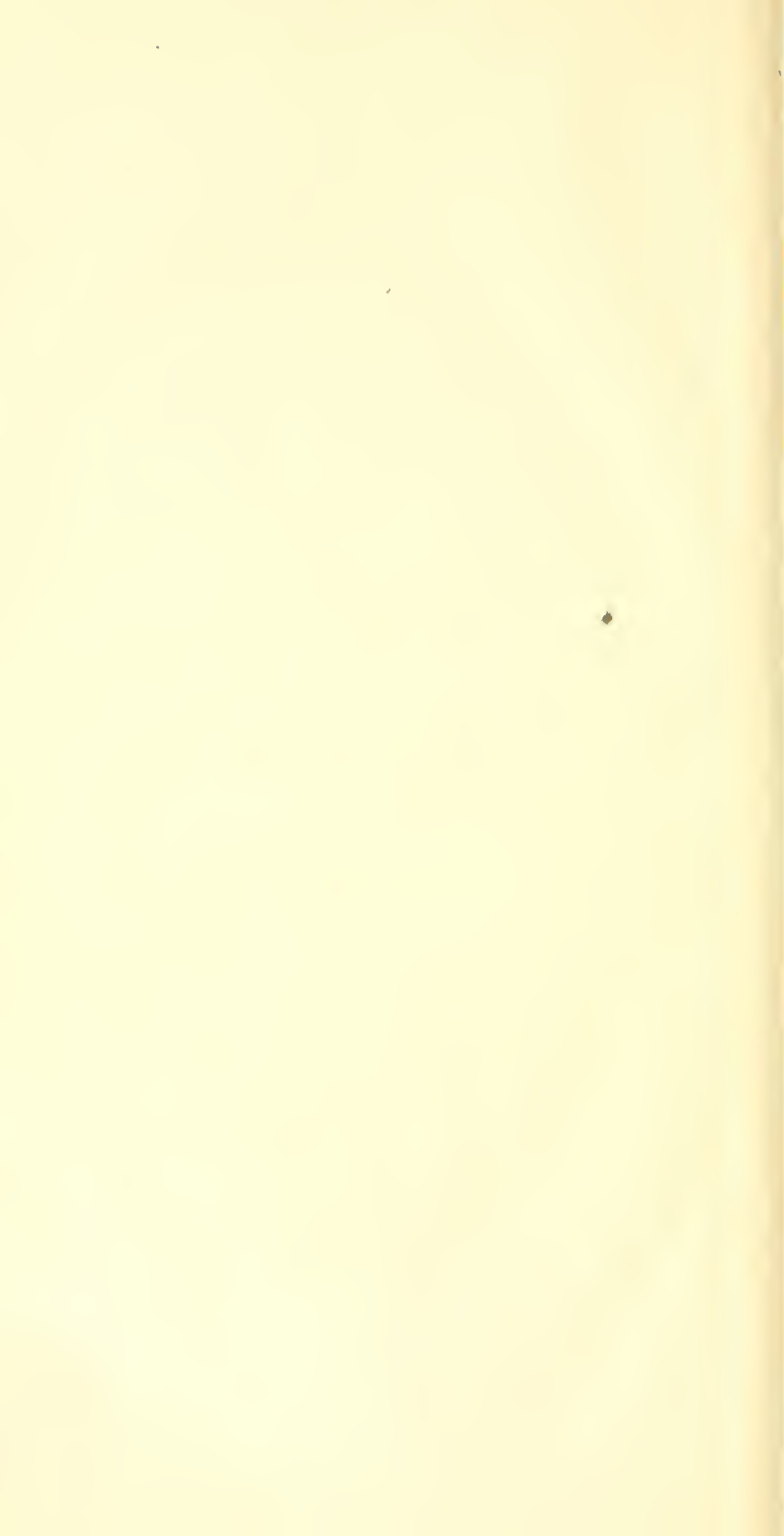
RECORDING SECRETARY,
HORATIO PRATT, Esq.

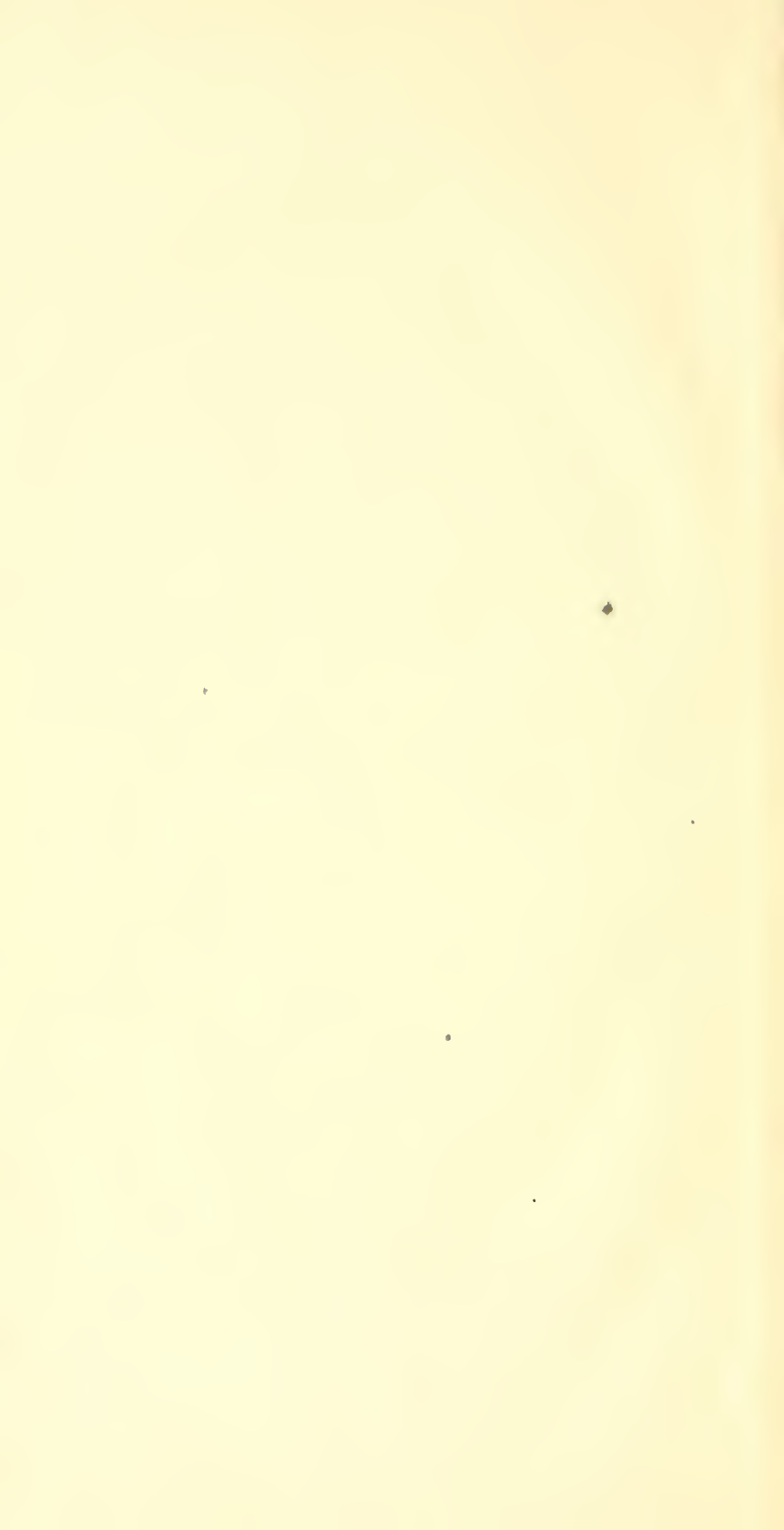
TREASURER,
HIRAM M. BARNEY, Esq.

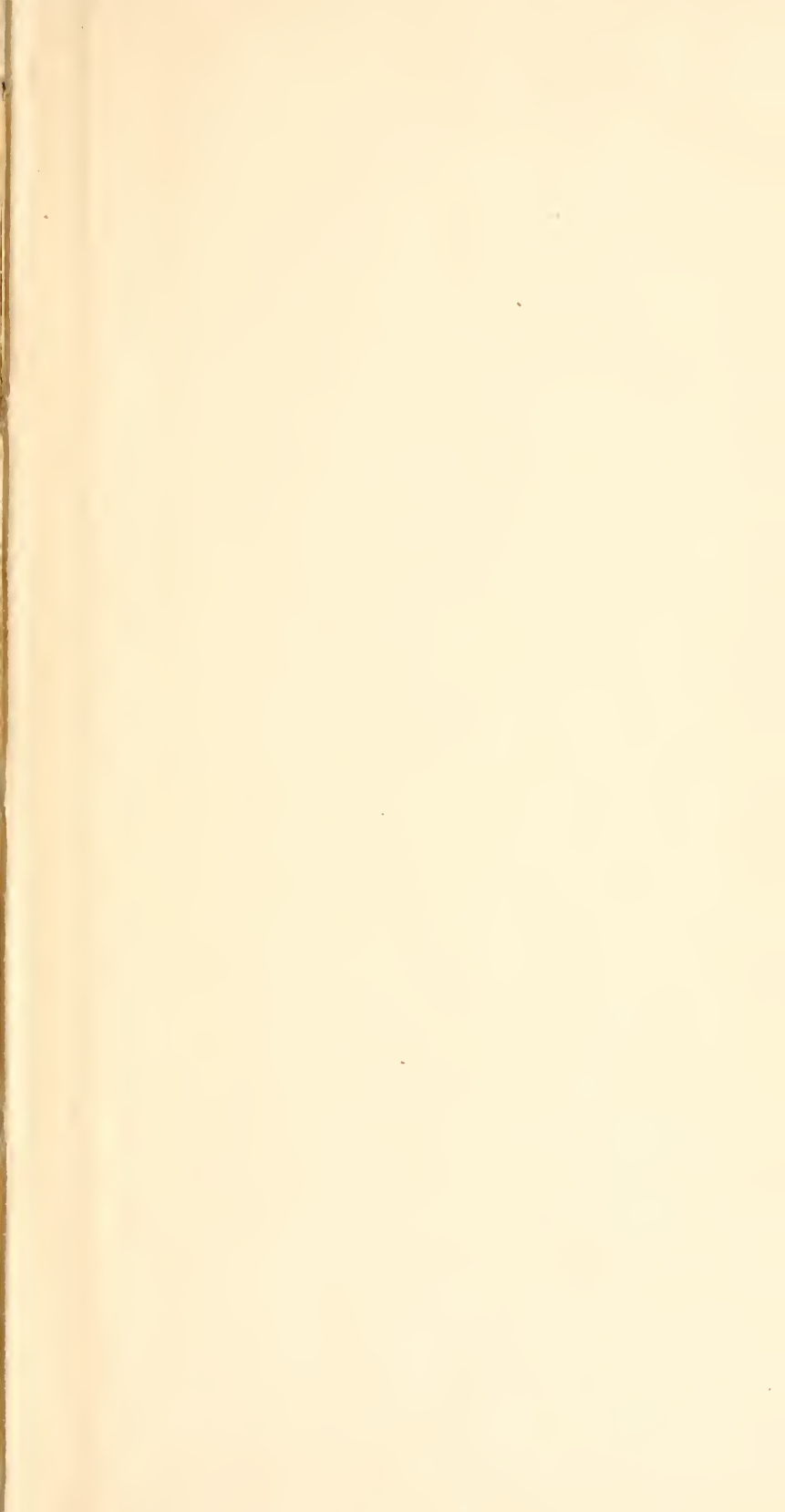
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
MR. JOSEPH DIXON,
JAMES SPROAT, Esq.,
CHARLES RICHMOND, Esq.
H. G. O. COLBY, Esq.
MR. THOMAS C. BROWN.



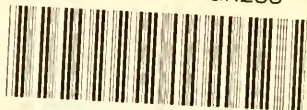








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